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common name	<b>Black-tailed Jackrabbit</b>
scientific name	<i>Lepus californicus</i>
phylum	Chordata
class	Mammalia
order	Lagomorpha
family	Leporidae
habitat	common in grasslands and deserts
size	up to 53 cm long
description	The Black-tailed Jackrabbit is grayish-brown with large, black-tipped ears and a black streak on the top of its tail. Its long hind legs help it to run 30 to 35 mile per hour.

- fun facts** The Black-tailed Jackrabbit has an unusual habit: it eats its own **feces**! After food is digested for the first time, the rabbit eats its "cecal" pellets. These pass through the jackrabbit's digestive system a second time to produce "fecal" pellets. This habit (called coprophagy) allows the Black-tailed Jackrabbit to take more energy and nutrients out of its food the second time around.
- life cycle** The female Black-tailed Jackrabbit gives birth to several litters between December and September. There are 2 to 4 young per litter. The nest is a shallow depression on the ground. The newborn rabbits are covered with fur with eyes wide open, ready to run. If they do not become dinner for another species, Black-tailed Jackrabbits can live for 8 years.
- ecology** The Black-tailed Jackrabbit eats plants, so it is an **herbivore**. It sits at the base of bushes or clumps of tall grasses, often near soil mounds piled up by Ground Squirrels or Pocket Gophers. These areas offer cover from the Golden Eagles, hawks and Coyotes which hunt them.
- conservation** The Black-tailed Jackrabbit once lived in large numbers in areas that have since been turned into farms, houses and businesses. The way people live in an area changes the quality of its habitat so the jackrabbit can no longer survive there.

Some ranchers shoot and poison Black-tailed Jackrabbits. They believe that the rabbits compete with their cattle for food in the grasslands.

investigate

While walking in grasslands, look for the round, dark brown, fecal pellets dropped by the Black-tailed Jackrabbit. Look for the well-worn trails, about the width of a jackrabbit, that crisscross the grassland. Also, scan the horizon for two big ears sticking straight up into the air like antennae. Where there is one Black-tailed Jackrabbit, there are usually more!

